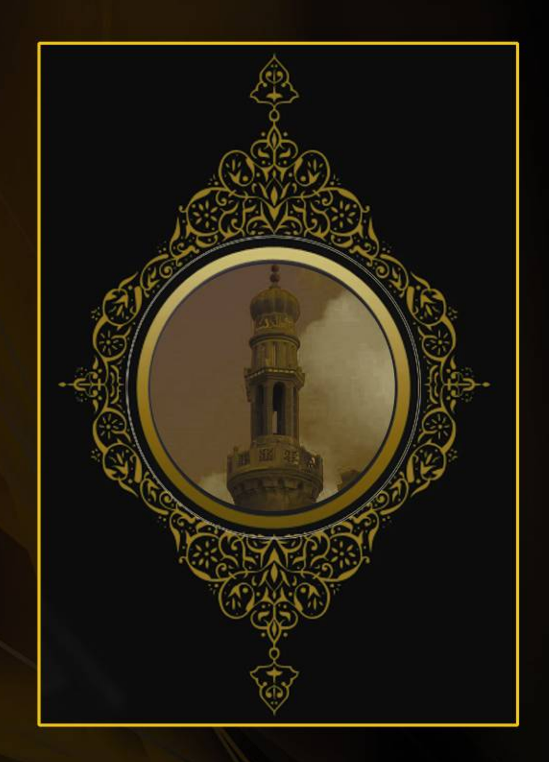
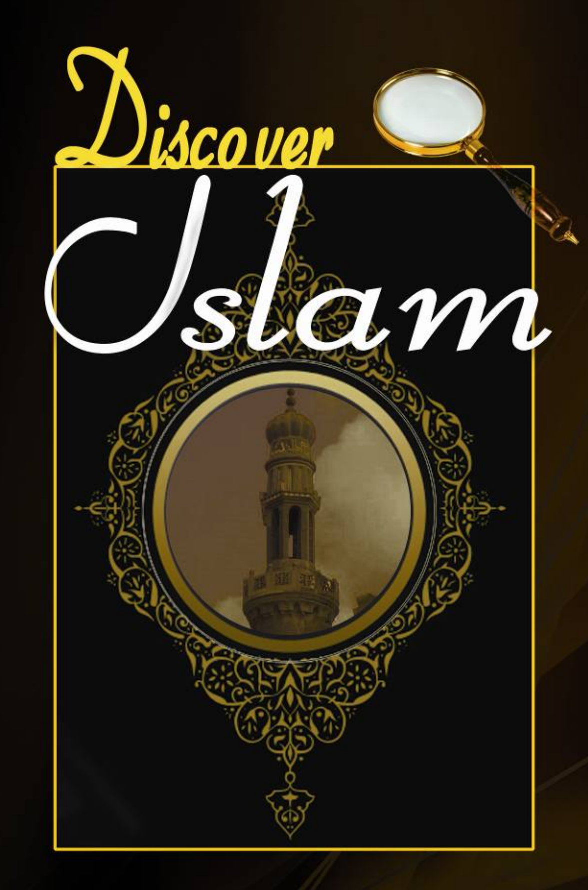


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اكتشف الإسلام - اللغة الانجليزية

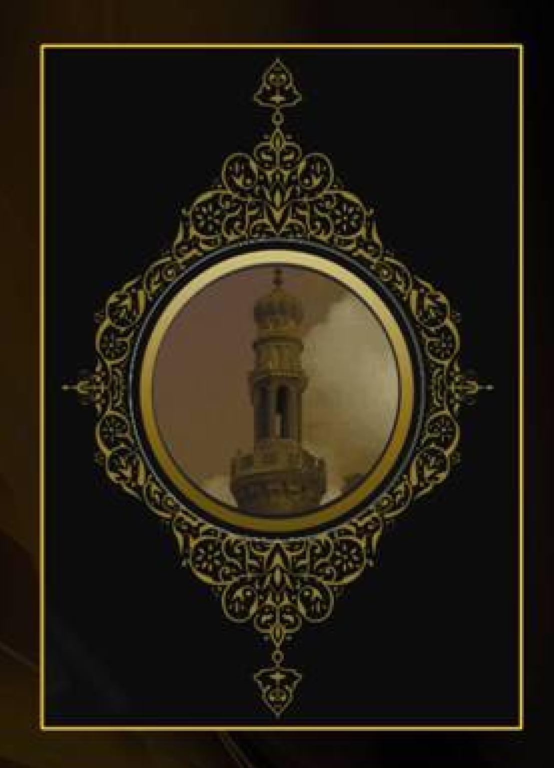


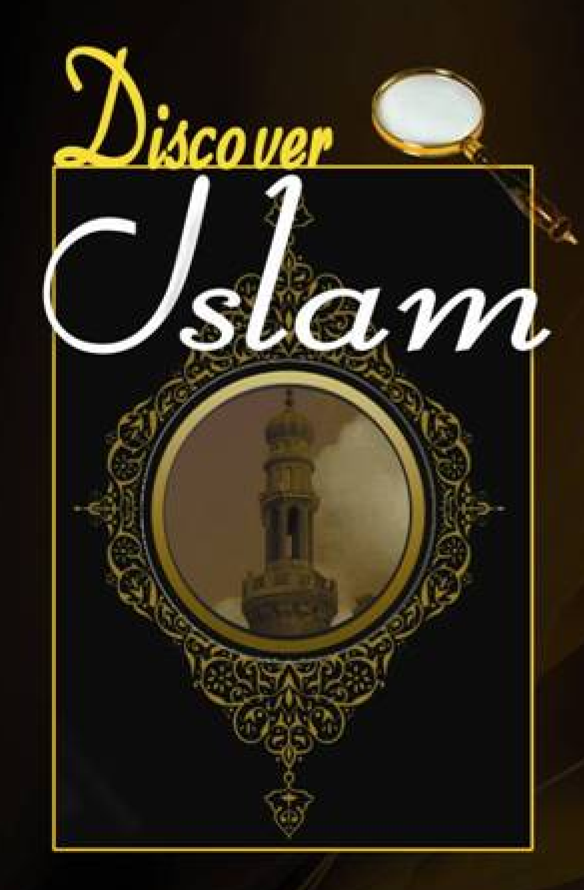
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اكتشف الإسلام - اللغة الانجليزية

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إعداد وتصميم

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Compiled by

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شركة الراجحي المصرفية - فرع الزلفي

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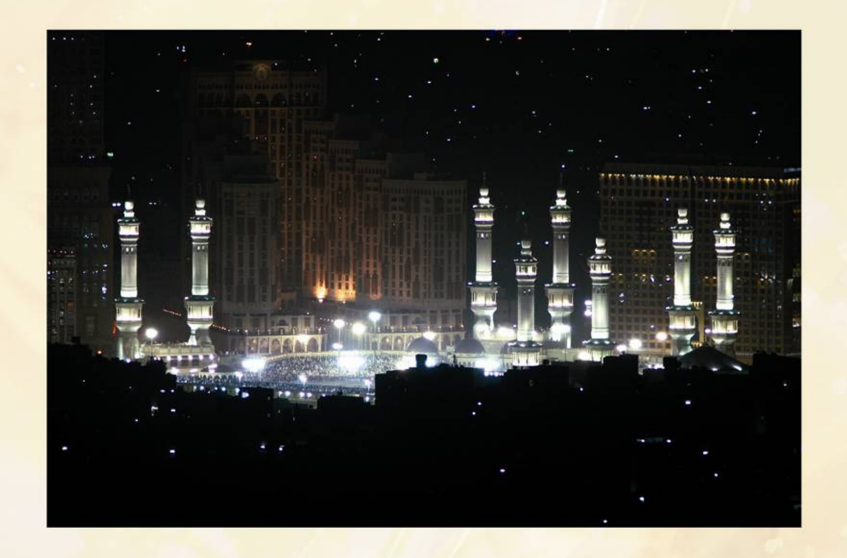
Today the main concept people in the West have about Islam is from its media image. This is driven by the relevant companies seeking to make an exciting story. These images of Islam are largely, if not entirely, fictional. Each little lie created by these stories has to be responded to oppression of women , terrorism intolerance', 'barbaric punishments' and more are routinely wheeled out.

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What is Islam?

Islam is not a new religion. It is the same truth that God (Allah) revealed through all His prophets to every people. More than fifth of the world's population believe in Islam.





Islam teaches the purest form of Monotheism and regards polytheism as the deadliest sin. Allah (God), according to Islam, is the One God, who is Indivisible in Person and Who has no partner: wife, son or daughter. He is the Matchless and "naught is as His likeness". "He begetteth not, nor was He begotten". He is the First, the Last, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Almighty, the Omniscient. He is the Creator, the Nourisher, the Cherisher of all things.

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He is the All-just, the Avenger of the wrongs done to the weak and the oppressed, the Compassionate, the Merciful and Loving, the Guide, the Friend, the Magnificent, the Glorious, the Beautiful and the True. In short, He is the Possessor of all Excellence.



According to Islam, the human intellect, though a great and powerful asset, has its natural limits, and, therefore, neither the normative nor the empirical sciences are capable of leading humanity to a sure knowledge of ultimate truths and the code of life based upon them. The only source of sure knowledge open to humanity is, consequently, Divine Guidance, and that course has been actually open ever since the beginnings of human life on earth. Allah raised His "Prophets" and "Messengers" and revealed His Guidance to them for transmission to humanity. Coming from the same Source, all revealed religions have, therefore, been one, i.e., Islam, submission to Allah the creator of the universe.



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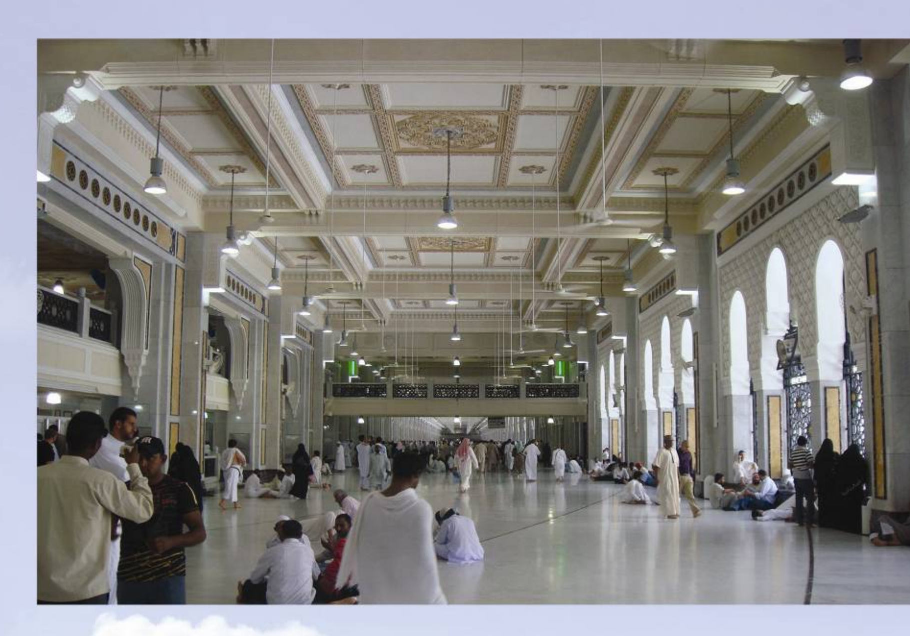


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Islam stands in sharp contrast with those religions which interpret the Salvation of man in terms of the acceptance of certain intricate and inexplicable formulae. Wherever the Holy Qur'an mentions human salvation, it bases it on "right belief" as well as "righteous action", emphasizing the former as the ground and the latter as the sequence.

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Muslims

More than 1.7 billion people form a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe are united by their common Islamic faith. About 18% live in the Arab world. The followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims are not to be confused with Arabs. Muslims may be Arabs, Turks, Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, Malaysians, Indonesians, Europeans, Africans, Americans, Chinese, or other nationalities. An Arab could be a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew or an atheist. Usually a person who lives in the Arab World and adopts the Arabic language is called an Arab.

From the very beginning, Islam had a universal message for all people. This can be seen in the fact that some of the early companions of the Prophet Muhammad were not only Arabs, but also Persians, Africans and Byzantine Romans.

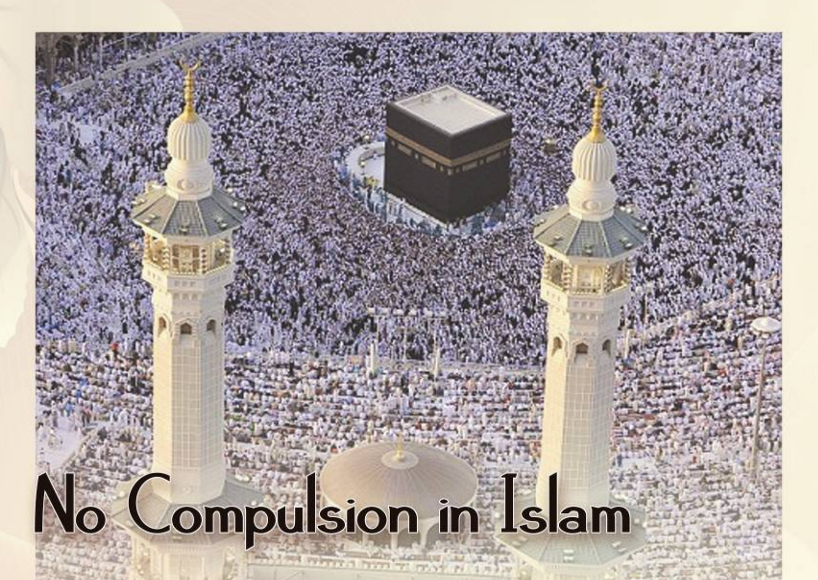
A Muslim is a person who freely accepts to base his beliefs, values and faith on the will of Almighty God. In the past, even though you don't see it as much today, the word "Mohammedans" was often used as a label for Muslims. This label is a misnomer and is the result of either wilful distortion or sheer ignorance. One of the reasons for the misconception is that Europeans were taught for centuries that Muslims worshipped the Prophet Muhammad in the same way that Christians worship Jesus. This is absolutely not true since a Muslim is not permitted to worship anyone or anything besides Almighty God.

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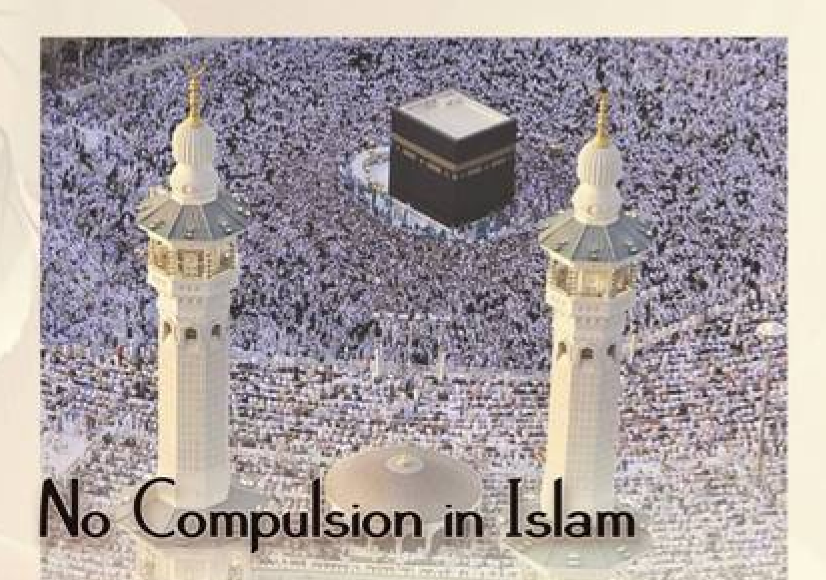
No Compulsion in Islam

Compulsion has been explicitly banned by Islam with the Qur'anic declaration: "there is no compulsion in matters of faith", and the propaganda that Muslims went out into the world with the sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other to convert the non-Muslims forcibly to Islam is a pure fabrication. Indeed, it is so utterly unfounded that even an enemy of Islam like Rev. Dr. O'Leary had to admit: "History makes it clear that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races, is one of the most absurd myths that the historians have ever repeated". (Islam at the Croos-Roads, page 8).

False gods

A great number of people invented their own ways of worship. Some people began to ascribe partners to the Creator in their worship and began to prostrate in front of mortals. This is not only against common sense and understanding but is also against the teachings of the Prophets. It is a well-known fact that the one who created man is also the one who sent messengers and the messengers showed the ways of worship. A person who worships according to the ways shown by them, will be successful.

To follow in the footsteps of one's ancestors or the cultural traditions of one's fellow-countrymen and family traditions without proof is an insensible act.



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Now, think of yourself, of your organs, of your numerous and efficient body systems, how they are cooperatively functioning to secure healthful life for you!

Behold all that is around you on earth: things, plants, insects, animals, birds and fishes. Don't you see that they have accurate systems governing and guiding their life?

Behold all that is above you in space: sun, moon, planets, stars, clouds, wind....etc., aren't they all functioning properly and accurately and rendering valuable services to our life on earth ? Who created all these fantastic things? Who established their accurate systems? Who is controlling this huge and complicated universe?

No one dared so far to claim creating, or being able to create, any single thing, even a hair!! The Creator and The Sustainer of all these creatures is One only; if there were more than one there would have been confusion in the heavens and the earth! That One is Allah (the Only true God).





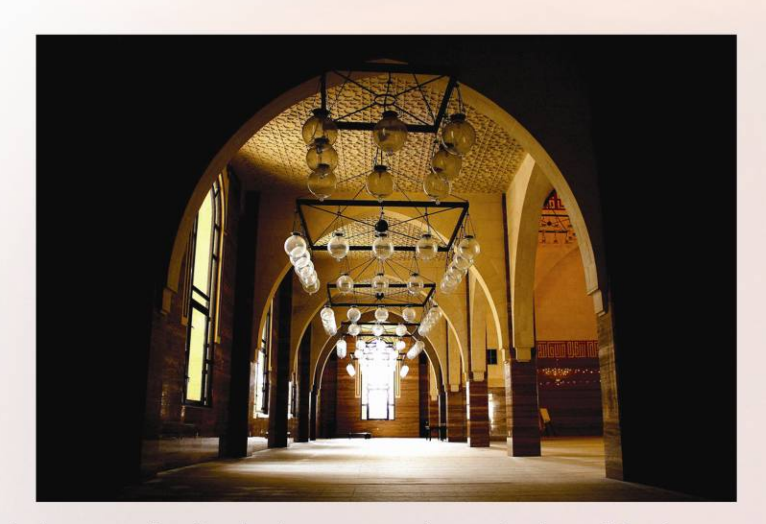
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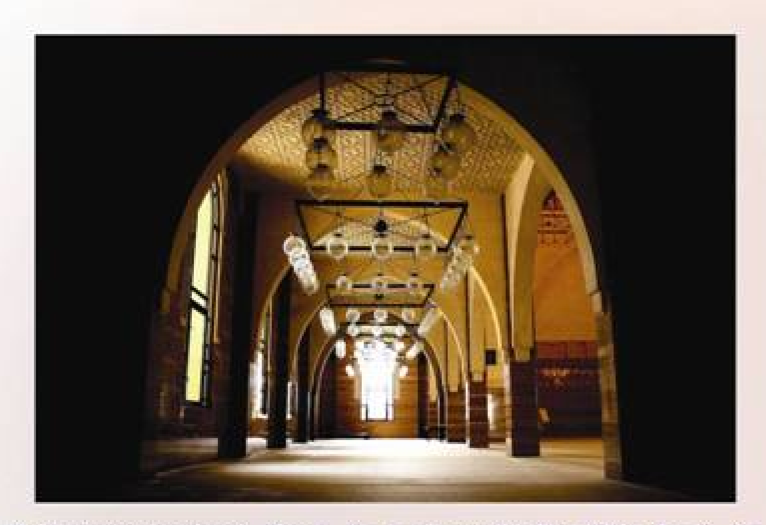
It is very logical, then, to acknowledge this fact, to know our Creator and Provider, to be grateful to Him and to submit ourselves and our life to His Wise and Merciful Guidance. Our Creator has endowed us with intellect to understand, and with freedom to choose the right path. Allah has showed us the right path through His Messengers sealed by Muhammad, and His Books completed by Al-Qur'an.

In front of us there are two ways: One is leading to bliss in this life and in the Hereafter, that is Islam. The other is leading to misery and loss in this world, and to eternal punishment in the Hereafter.

Choice is in our hands .

Story

An old man was once admitted to hospital for not being able to pass urine. When he was treated and the bill was presented to Him, he began crying. He was asked the reason for crying, he said, 'For 70 years, I ate food and drank and I ate and I passed toxins with ease and not once did Allah send me His bill.'



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Spread of Islam

Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine. Islam calls for faith in only One God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation.

Islam is a total system of living. A Muslim is supposed to live in peace and harmony with all these segments. It follows that a Muslim is any person, anywhere in the world, whose obedience, allegiance, and loyalty are to God, the Lord of the Universe.

Divinity

The religion of Islam is a Divine code of life and therefore it is complete and comprehensive, perfect and absolute. There are no flaws and deficiencies in Islam. It provides guidance in every aspect of our life from the time of birth till death. It provides guidance in our domestic life, social life, economic life and political life. It also provides guidance on food, drinks and nutrients which is of paramount importance for a healthy way of life.



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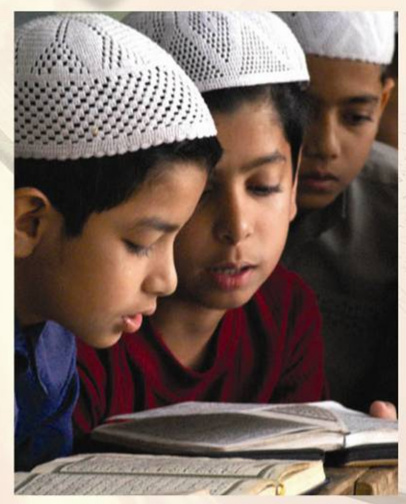
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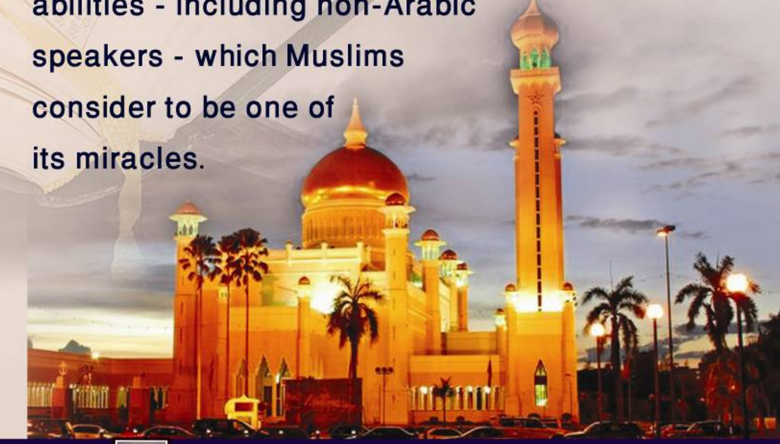


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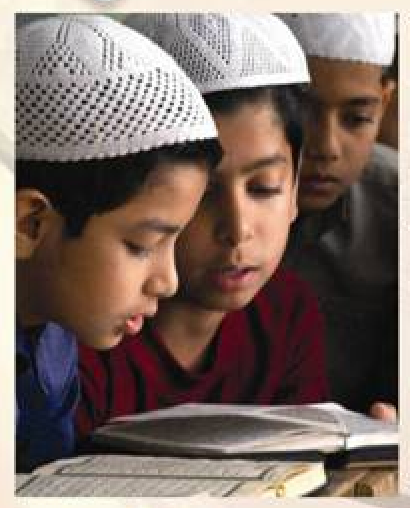


The Quran is the primary source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects that concern all human beings: wisdom, beliefs, worship, and law. However, it focuses on the relationship between God and His creatures. It also provides guidelines for a just society, proper human relationships and equal divisions of power.

The Quran is the most often-read book in the world. Revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the 7th century, and revered by Muslims as being God's final Scripture and Testament, its words have been lovingly recited, memorized, and implemented by Muslims of every nationality ever since. The faithful are inspired, consoled often moved to tears by its eloquence and poetic imagery, especially when recited aloud. And yet, the Quran is unique in being the only Scripture that is free of scientific inaccuracies, whose historical authenticity can be verified, and whose text has been so carefully preserved that just one authorized version (in Arabic) exists. Approximately the length of the New Testament, the Quran is also the only holy book that can be memorized in its entirety by people of all ages and intellectual abilities - including non-Arabic speakers - which Muslims consider to be one of its miracles.



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Muhammad pbuh

Muhammad (pbuh) the prophet of Islam was born in Makkah in the year 570, As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity. It was his habit to meditate from time to time in the cave of Hira near Makkah. At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad received his revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel.

Muhammad began to share the revelations he received from God with the people of Makkah. Being idol worshippers, the general populace rejected Muhammad's call to worship only one God. They opposed him and his small group of followers in every way possible, some suffering bitter forms of persecution and even torture.

In 622, God gave the community of believers the command to emigrate. This event, known as the hijrah, or migration, in which they left Makkah for the blessed city of Madinah (some 260 miles to the north), marks the beginning of the official Muslim calendar.

The city of Madinah provided the new community of Muslims a safe and nurturing abode in which they could practice their faith without the spite of persecution. After several years, the Prophet and his followers returned to Makkah, peacefully claiming the city and forgiving their enemies. Then, turning their attention to the Ka'bah (the sanctuary that Prophet Abraham had previously built), they removed the idols and rededicated the sanctuary to the worship of the One God. By the time of the Prophet's passing, at the age of 63 (may God bless him and grant him peace), most of the people of Arabia had embraced the Prophet's message, and in less than a century thereafter, Islam rapidly spread to Spain in the west, and as far as China in the east.

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Examples of the Prophet's sayings

- God is merciful to those who show mercy to others.
- Power consists not in being able to strike another, but in being able to control oneself when anger arises.
- Happy is the person who finds fault with himself instead of finding fault with others.
- A perfect Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe.
- Whoever believes in one God and the Hereafter, let him speak what is good or remain silent.
- He is not of us who is not affectionate to the little ones and does not respect the reputation of the old.
- Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you; and speak the truth even if it be against yourself.
- Keep yourselves far from envy, because it eats up and takes away good actions as fire consumes and burns the wood.
- "None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."
- The major sins are associating other objects of worship with God, disobedience to parents, murder, and deliberate perjury.
- Among the believers who show most perfect faith are those who have best disposition and are kindest to their families.



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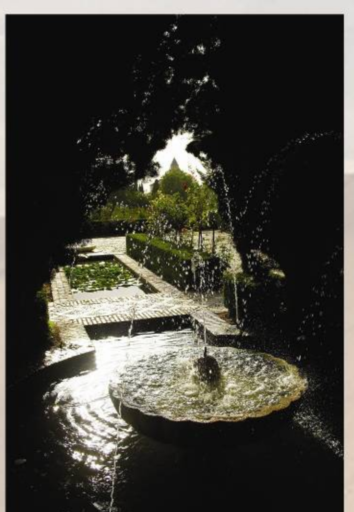
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- Forgive him who wrongs you; join him who cuts you off; do good to him who does evil to you; and speak the truth even if it be against yourself.
- Keep yourselves far from envy, because it eats up and takes away good actions as fire consumes and burns the wood.
- "None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."
- The major sins are associating other objects of worship with God, disobedience to parents, murder, and deliberate perjury.
- Among the believers who show most perfect faith are those who have best disposition and are kindest to their families.



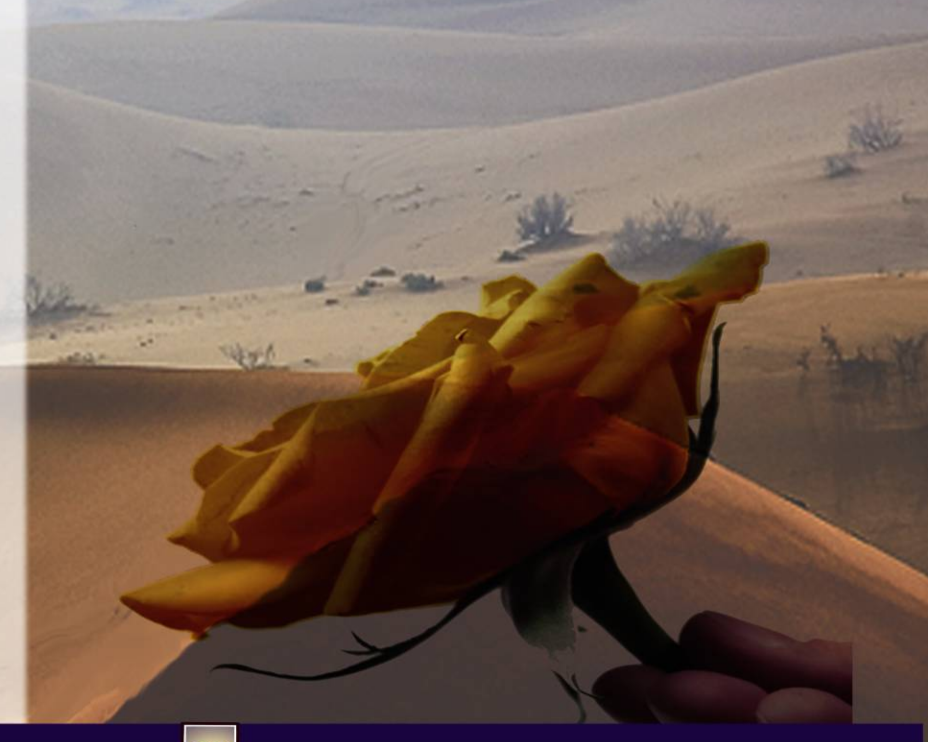
When Misunderstood

In today's turbulent world, Islam is often on the front page - mostly for the wrong reasons. Islam means peace; yet some have taken this peaceful way of life and hijacked it into a violent way, and distorted their ideology for personal and political gains. Seeing a faith through explosive world events, and judging it by the actions of a misguided few, is the primary reasons why Islam is often misunderstood.

Islam is sometimes, intentionally misrepresented. Some politicians, religious leaders and media have found an ideal scapegoat in Islam. By associating Islam with the inhumane acts of a handful, they have been successful in driving larger numbers of people to vote for them; to donate towards their ministries; and to read their newspapers, watch their television programs and listen to their radio shows.



However, with an increasing number of Muslims speaking out against this falsehood; the true and peaceful nature of Islam is becoming more evident. Muslims are standing up against terrorism, against the persecution and killing of innocent people, and against those who perpetrate such injustice in the name of any faith.



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ISLAM AND NON-MUSLIMS

Muslims are required to respect all those who are faithful and God conscious people, namely those who received messages. Christians and Jews are called People of the Book. Muslims are asked to call upon the People of the Book for common terms, namely, to worship One God, and to work together for the solutions of the many problems in the society.

Christians and Jews lived peacefully with Muslims throughout centuries in the Middle East and other Asian and African countries. The second Caliph, Umar, chose not to pray in the church in Jerusalem, so as not to give later Muslims an excuse to take it over. Christians entrusted the Muslims, and as such the key of the Church in Jerusalem is still in the hands of the Muslims.

When Jews fled from Spain during the Inquisition, they were welcomed by the Muslims. They settled in the heart of the Islamic Caliphate. They enjoyed positions of power and authority. Throughout the Muslim world, churches, synagogues and missionary schools were built within the Muslim neighborhoods. These places were protected by Muslims during bad times and good, and have continued to receive this protection during the contemporary crises in the Middle East.



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Life after Death

Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the next realm of existence. This life is a test for each individual for the life after death. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and the dead will be resurrected for judgment by God. This day will be the beginning of a life that will never end. This day is the Day of Judgment.

After having sent the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to call people to Islam. God is our Creator and Sustainer. He created for us whatever is in the earth. All the blessings and good things we have are from Him. So after all this, when someone rejects belief in God, His Prophet Muhammad(pbuh), or His religion of Islam, it is just that he or she be punished in the Hereafter. Actually, the main purpose of our creation is to worship God alone and to obey Him, as God has said: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter." The Holy Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 85

The dead have a continued and conscious existence of a kind in the grave. Muslims believe that, upon dieing, a person enters an intermediate phase of life between death and resurrection. Many events take place in this new "world", such as the "trial" of the grave, where everyone will be questioned by angels about their religion, prophet, and Lord. The grave is a garden of paradise or a pit of hell; angels of mercy visit the souls of believers and angels of punishment come for the unbelievers.

People will be resurrected into their original physical bodies from their graves, thereby entering the third and final phase of life. Paradise and Hell will be the final dwelling places for the faithful and the damned after the Last Judgment. They are real and eternal. The bliss of the people of Paradise shall never end and the punishment of unbelievers condemned to Hell shall never cease. Unlike a pass-fail system in some other belief-systems, the Islamic view is more sophisticated and conveys a higher level of divine justice. This can be seen in two ways. First, some believers may suffer in Hell for unrepentant, cardinal sins. Second, both Paradise and Hell have levels.

Life after Death

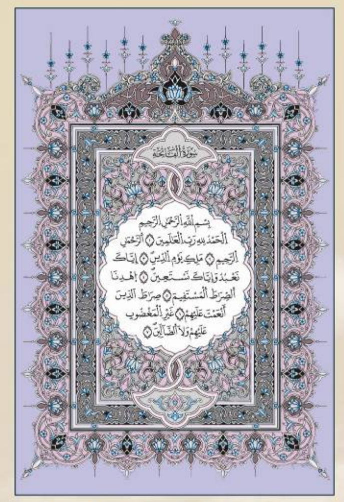
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Pillars of Faith



The pillars of Faith, enumerated in many verses of the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, are belief in God, in God's Angels, His Books, His Messengers, in the Hereafter and in Qadar

1. Belief in God. Belief that God is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Owner of the Universe and its contents, the provider of everything, the Giver of life and the Causer of death.

• Belief that God is the only One who has the right to be worshipped.

• Belief in God's names and attributes which befit His Majesty. He does not resemble His creation, God says in the Qur'an: "There is nothing like Him" [42:11].

2. Belief in the Angels: Angels are creatures created by God for specific functions in this world. They are normally invisible and they have no free will; they do as God commands them. They are not to be worshipped. Angel Gabriel was responsible for conveying the revelation to the prophets. Two angels are assigned to every human being to record their good and evil deeds. There are so many other angels that have other responsibilities.

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3. Belief in the Scriptures : That is to belief in all the scriptures revealed by God to His messengers in their original form. All the revealed books call to the worship of God alone and to avoid worshipping other than Him or others besides Him. Muslims believe in the books mentioned in the Qur'an: the books of Abraham (Suhuf), the Scripture of Moses (Torah), the Psalms of David (Zaboor) and the Gospel of Prophet Jesus (Al-Injeel). However, long before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), they had all been lost or distorted by later generations over the centuries. However, God, the Most Compassionate, didn't leave man to go astray , so He revealed the Qur'an and promised to preserve it as the final revelation for humankind. He said: "Verily, I have sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, I will guard it from corruption." 14 (15:9)

4. Belief in the Messengers of God: is to belief that God conveyed His message through selected human beings. These individuals, called prophets and messengers, were selected by God to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented. God sent to every nation a prophet(s) to convey the message that He alone was to be worshipped and any thing worshipped along with Him or besides Him is false. The Qur'an mentions the names of only twenty-five of the prophets while indicating that many others were not mentioned by name. The first of these prophets was Adam and the last was Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon them all). Every prophet was sent to a specific people for specific periods of time except Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) who was sent to all people until the Final Hour.

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6. The Belief in Predestination: It includes the belief in the following:

a) God knows everything. His knowledge is not bound by time. Past, present and future are all known to Him.

b) Everything which takes place is already written in a book called: The Preserved Tablet.

c) God has created everything, including the actions of people, the good and the bad, but He commanded people to do good deeds and forbade them from doing evil.

d) One must believe that everything that happens in this Universe is happening with God's permission, and nothing can take place against His will.

It should be noted that God's prior knowledge of things does not mean that human beings have no choice. Human beings choose, but God knows their choices prior to their choosing and action.



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Jesus pbuh

Muslim respect and revere Jesus, and await his Second Coming. They consider him as one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. A Muslim never refers to him simply as 'Jesus', but always adds the phrase 'peace be upon him '.

The Qur'an confirms his virgin birth (a chapter of the Qur'an is entitled 'Mary'), and Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation. The Qur'an describes the Annunciation as follows:

And when the angels said: O Mary! surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of of the world. (Qur'an, 3:42)

'And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous.

She said: My Lord! How can I have a child when no mortal hath touched me? He said: So (it will be). Allah createth what He will. If He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. ' (Qur'an, 3:45 - 47)

"Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of the dust, and then said to him, 'Be!' and he was. (Qur'an 3:59)

During his prophetic mission Jesus performed many miracles: I have come to you with a sign from your lord: I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by God's leave. (Qur'an 3:49)

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Women in Islam

At a time when the rest of the world, from Greece and Rome to India and China, considered women as no better than children or even slaves, with no rights whatsoever, Islam acknowledged women's equality with men in a great many respects. The Quran states: "And among His signs is this: that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest and peace of mind in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Certainly, herein indeed are signs for people who reflect."

[Quran 30:21]



Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manners and kindest to his wife." [Abu Dawud]

Muslims believe that Adam and Eve were created from the same soul. Both were equally guilty of their sin and fall from grace, and Allah forgave both. Many women in Islam have had high status; consider the fact that the first person to convert to Islam was Khadijah, the wife of Muhammad, whom he both loved and respected.



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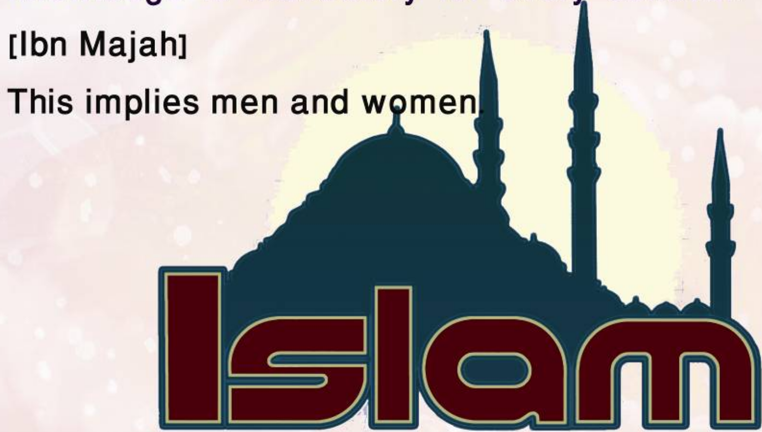
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His favorite wife after Khadijah's death, Ayshah, became renowned as a scholar and one of the greatest sources of Hadith literature. Many of the female Companions accomplished great deeds and achieved fame, and throughout Islamic history there have been famous and influential scholars and jurists.

With regard to education, both women and men have the same rights and obligations. This is clear in Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every believer." [Ibn Majah]

This implies men and women.



A woman is to be treated as God has endowed her, with rights, such as to be treated as an individual, with the right to own and dispose of her own property and earnings, enter into contracts, even after marriage. She has the right to be educated and to work outside the home if she so chooses. She has the right to inherit from her father, mother, and husband.



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A Muslim woman also has obligations. All the laws and regulations pertaining to prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage, doing good deeds, etc., apply to women, albeit with minor differences having mainly to do with female physiology.

Before marriage, a woman has the right to choose her husband. Islamic law is very strict regarding the necessity of having the woman's consent for marriage. The groom gives a marriage dowry to the bride for her own personal use. She keeps her own family name, rather than taking her husband's. As a wife, a woman has the right to be supported by her husband even if she is already rich. She also has the right to seek divorce and custody of young children. She does not return the dowry, except in a few unusual situations.

Despite the fact that in many places and times Muslim communities have not always adhered to all or even many of the foregoing in practice, the ideal has been there for 1,400 years, while virtually all other major civilizations did not begin to address these issues or change their negative attitudes until the 19th and 20th centuries, and there are still many contemporary civilizations which have yet to do so.

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Amongst the clearest examples of Islam's honoring women is the great status of the mother in Islam. Islam commands kindness, respect and obedience to parents and specifically emphasizes and gives preference to the mother. Islam raises parents to a status greater than that found in any other religion or ideology. In the Qur'an. Allah says:

"Worship God and join not any partners with Him; and be kind to your parents..."

[Quran 4:36]

The mention of servitude to parents follows immediately after servitude to God. This is repeated throughout the Qur'an.

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say, "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." [Quran 17:2324-]





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The Qur'an emphasizes the great struggles the mother goes through for her child, to highlight the need for one to reciprocate their parents sacrifice for them: "And We have enjoined on man [to be good] to his parents: in travail upon travail did his mother bear him and his weaning was over two years. Be thankful to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination." [Quran 31:14]

The Qur'an repeats its mention of the struggles of the mother in yet another passage: "And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims." [Quran 46:15]

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) continually used to remind his followers of the status of the mother and the obligation of being good to one's parents. The following narration is a beautiful example of the noble position of the mother:

A man came to the Prophet and said: O Messenger of Allah! Who from amongst mankind warrants the best companionship from me? He replied: "Your mother." The man asked: Then who? So he replied: "Your mother." The man then asked: Then who? So the Prophet replied again: "Your mother." The man then asked: Then who? So he replied: "Then your father."

(Bukhârî 5971 and Muslim 72/)

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) showed us the importance of serving one's parents in the following narration reported by Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud:

I asked the Prophet, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is the best deed?' He replied 'Prayer offered on time.'
I asked, 'What is next in goodness?' He replied, 'To be dutiful and kind to one's parents. [Bukhârî, Muslim]

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Hijab

Why do Muslim women have to wear Hijab?

The answer to the question is, Muslim women observe Hijab because Allah has told them to do so:

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed..." [Quran 33:59]

Other secondary reasons include the requirement for modesty in both men and women. Both will then be evaluated for intelligence and skills instead of looks and sexuality. A Muslim woman who covers her head is making a statement about her identity. Anyone who sees her will know that she is a Muslim and has a good moral character. As a chaste, modest, pure woman, she does not want her sexuality to enter into interactions with men in the smallest degree. A woman who covers herself is concealing her sexuality but allowing her femininity to be brought out.

Hijab is not merely a covering dress but more importantly, it is behavior, manners, speech and appearance in public. Dress is only one facet of the total being. The basic requirement of the Muslim woman's dress apply to the Muslim man's clothing with the difference being mainly in degree. Modesty requires that the area between the navel and the knee be covered in front of all people except the wife. A Muslim should dress to show his identity as a Muslim

Who has the power to determine what decent and modest clothing is? Who is to determine what decent and modest behavior is? Muslims assign this right to God alone. This is the essence of "Islam." "Islam" means "The submission to the will of God." What God commands, a Muslim does. They do not demand that God justify his commands before they accept them. Once they have verified that a command is indeed from God then they abide by it without hesitation.

Hijab

Why do Muslim women have to wear Hijab?

The answer to the question is, Muslim women observe Hijab because Allah has told them to do so:

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed..." [Quran 33:59]

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Some Proves Islam is the Truth

Literature and poetry have been instruments of human expression and creativity, in all cultures. The world also witnessed an age when literature and poetry occupied pride of position, similar to that now enjoyed by science and technology.

Even non-Muslim scholars agree that the Qur'an is Arabic literature par excellence - that it is the best Arabic literature on the face of the earth. The Qur'an challenges mankind to produce the likes of it:

"And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true. "But if ye cannot- and of a surety you cannot- then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones -which is prepared for those who reject Faith."

[Al-Qur'an] 2:23 - 24

The challenge of the Qur'an, is to produce a single Surah (chapter) like the Surahs it contains. The same challenge is repeated in the Qur'an several times. The challenge to produce a Surah, which, in beauty, eloquence, depth and meaning is at least somewhat similar to a Qur'anic Surah remains unmet to this day.

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A modern rational man, however, would never accept a religious scripture which says, in the best possible poetic language, that the world is flat. This is because we live in an age, where human reason, logic and science are given primacy. Not many would accept the Qur'an's extraordinarily beautiful language, as proof of its Divine origin. It must also be acceptable on the strength of its own reason and logic. So here are some examples related to science:

THE BIG BANG

The creation of the universe is explained by astrophysicists as a widely accepted phenomenon, popularly known as 'The Big Bang'.
It is supported by observational and experimental data that has gathered by astronomers and astrophysicists for decades.

According to 'The Big Bang', the whole universe was initially one big mass (Primary Nebula). Then there was a 'Big Bang' (Secondary Separation) which resulted in the formation of Galaxies. These then divided to form stars, planets, the sun, the moon, etc. The origin of the universe was unique and the probability of it happening by 'chance' is nil.

The Qur'an contains the following verse regarding the origin of the universe:

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder?" [Al-Qu'ran 21:30]

The striking similarity between the Qur'anic verse and 'The Big Bang' is inescapable! How could a book, which first appeared in the deserts of Arabia 1400 years ago, contain this profound scientific truth?

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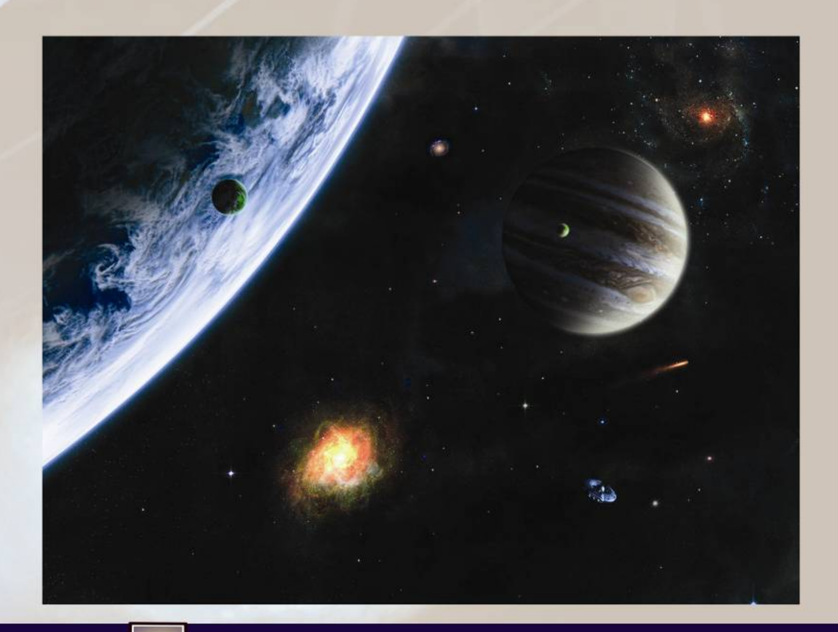
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Initial Gaseous Mass

Scientists agree that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter. In short, huge gaseous matter or clouds were present before the formation of the galaxies. To describe initial celestial matter, the word 'smoke' is more appropriate than gas. The following Qur'anic verse refers to this state of the universe by the word dukhaan which means smoke.

"Moreover, He Comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: 'Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly.' They said: 'We do come (together), in willing obedience." [Al-Qur'an 41:11]

Again, this fact is a corollary to the 'Big Bang' and was not known to anyone before the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him)1. What then, could have been the source of this knowledge?

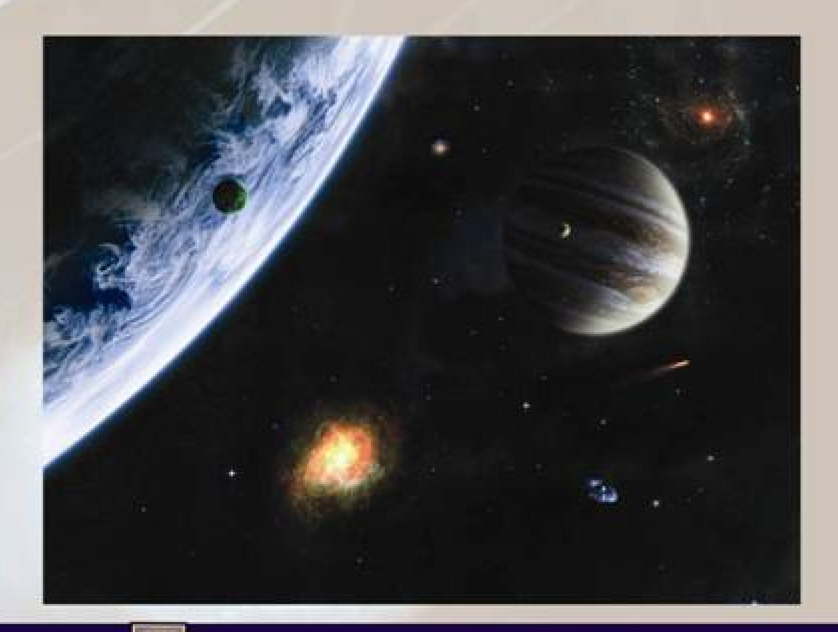


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THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE

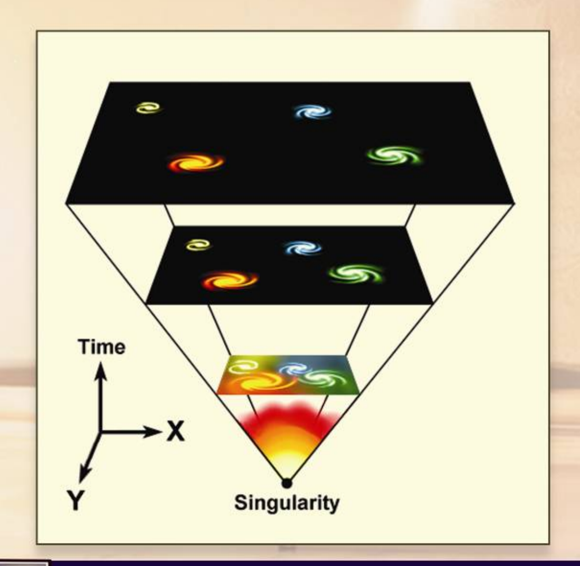
In 1925, an American astronomer by the name of Edwin Hubble, provided observational evidence that all galaxies are receding from one another, which implies that the universe is expanding. The expansion of the universe is now an established scientific fact. This is what Al-Qur'aan says regarding the nature of the universe:

"And it is We who have constructed the heaven with might, and verily, it is We who are steadily expanding it." [Al-Qur'aan 51:47]

The word "heaven", as stated in this verse, is used in various places in the Qur'an with the meaning of space and universe. Here again, the word is used with this meaning. In other words, in the Qur'an it is revealed that the universe "expands". And this is the very conclusion that science has reached today.

Stephen Hawking, in his book, 'A Brief History of Time', says, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the 20th century."

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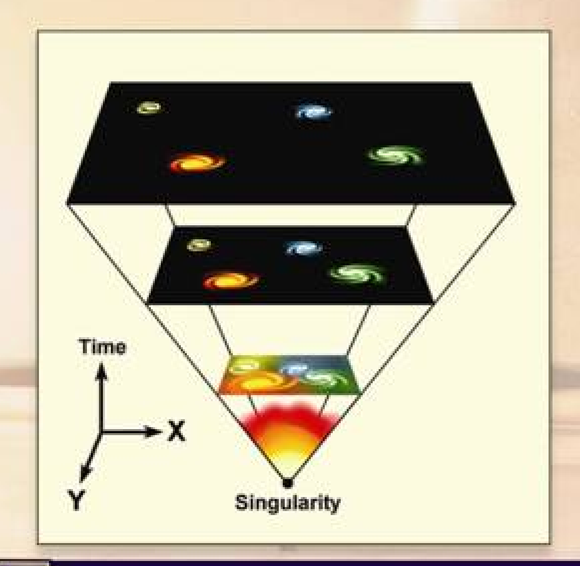
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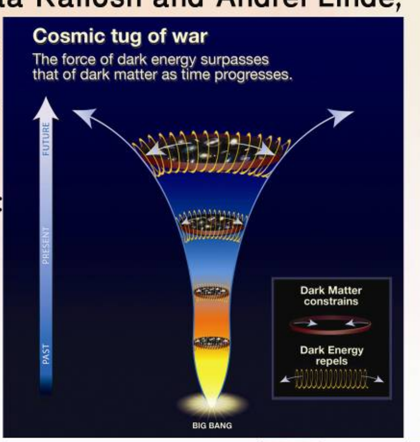
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THE END OF THE UNIVERSE

As we have stated above, the creation of the universe began with a huge explosion. From this point, the universe has been expanding ever since. Scientists say that when the mass of the universe has reached a sufficient level, this expansion will come to an end because of gravity, causing the universe to collapse in on itself.

It is also believed that the contracting universe will end in a fierce heat and contraction known as the "Big Crunch." This would lead to the end of all forms of life as we know them. Renata Kallosh and Andrei Linde, professors of physics from Stanford University, made the following statements on the subject:



The universe may be doomed to collapse and disappear. Everything we see now, and at a much larger distance that we cannot see, will collapse into a point smaller than a proton. Locally, it will be the same as if you were inside a black hole... We have found that some of the best attempts to describe dark energy predict that it will gradually become negative, which will cause the universe to become unstable, then collapse... Physicists have known that dark energy could become negative and the universe could collapse sometime in the very distant future... but now we see that we might be, not in the beginning, but in the middle of the life cycle of our universe.

This is how this scientific hypothesis of the Big Crunch is indicated in the Qur'an:

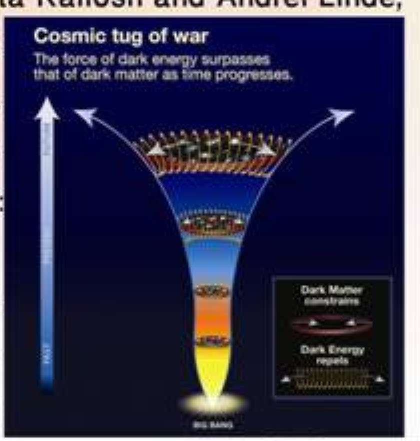
That Day We will fold up heaven like folding up the pages of a book. As We originated the first creation so We will regenerate it. It is a promise binding on Us. That is what We will do. (Qur'an, 21:104)

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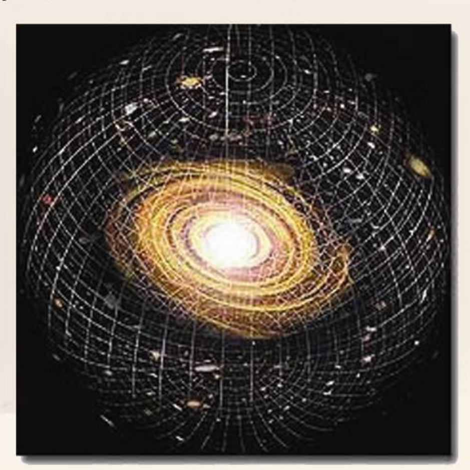
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They do not measure Allah with His true measure. The whole earth will be a mere handful for Him on the Day of Rising the heavens folded up in His right hand. Glory be to Him! He is exalted above the partners they ascribe! (Qur'an, 39:67)

According to the Big Crunch theory, the universe will begin to collapse slowly and will then increasingly pick up speed. At the end of the process the universe will have infinite density and be infinitely hot and small. This scientific theory runs parallel to the Qur'anic explanation of this particular scientific concept. (Allah knows best)



The Ease of Memorizing the Quran

God has made the Quran easy to memorize:

"And in truth We have made the Quran easy to remember; who, then, is willing to take it to heart?"

(Quran 54:17)

The ease with which Quran is memorized is inimitable. There is not a single scripture or religious text in the world that is as easy to memorize; even non-Arabs and children commit it to memory easily. The entire Quran is memorized by almost every Islamic scholar and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Muslims, generation after generation. Almost every Muslim has some portion of the Quran memorized to read in his prayers.



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Islam for a Better Life

Islam teaches that true happiness can only be obtained by living a life full of God-consciousness and being satisfied with what God has given us. Additionally, true "freedom" is freedom from being controlled by our base human desires and being ruled by man-made ideologies. This stands in stark contrast to the view of many people in the modern world, who consider "freedom" to be the ability to satisfy all of their desires without inhibition.

The clear and comprehensive guidance of Islam gives human-beings a well-defined purpose and direction in life. In addition to being members of the human-brotherhood of Islam, its well-balanced and practical teachings are a source of spiritual comfort, guidance and morality. A direct and clear relationship with Almighty God, as well as the sense of purpose and belonging that ones feels as a Muslim, frees a person from the many worries of everyday life.

Forgiveness for All Previous Sins

When a person accepts Islam all their previous sins, no matter how major, are forgiven by Allah. As quoted by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), "Islam wipes out whatever sins came before it". In other words, a person's slate is wiped clean.



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After converting to Islam, the person will be rewarded for his or her good and bad deeds according to the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "Your Lord, Who is blessed and exalted, is most merciful. If someone intends to do a good deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, (a reward of) ten to seven hundred or many more times (the reward of the good deed), will be recorded for him. And if someone intends to do a bad deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, a bad deed will be recorded against him or God will wipe it out."

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Say, 'Oh my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Do not despair of Allah's mercy, for Allah forgives all sins. He is indeed Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.' " (Qur'an 39:53)

"Except those who repent and believe and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Qur'an 25:-70)

When you die as a muslim, you will die at peace. You will have a happy life in the grave and later, eternal happiness. Angels at the time of death will comfort you. They will also show you your place in paradise. On the Day of Judgment, you will be able to see and meet all the prophets and messengers of God to mankind including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. You will be able to see and meet any and all of your friends and relatives. You will live an eternal life

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How to become a Muslim?

Islam is for the whole of humanity. Any human being can embrace Islam. You do not need anyones permission to become Muslim. So if you believe Islam is the truth then you should not delay your conversion to Islam. You should convert immediately because we are given a certain lifespan. Since we do not know when we are going to die. Not even a minute should be lost as your time to leave this life may be up the next minute.

No matter what sins you have committed or how wild your past was. You can still become a Muslim. Islam erases all sins committed prior to becoming a Muslim. As soon as you become a Muslim all your previous sins are forgiven.

To convert to Islam and become a Muslim a person needs to pronounce the below testimony with conviction and understanding its meaning:

"ASH-HADU ALLA ELAHA ILLA-ALLAH, WA
ASH-HADU ANNA MOHAMMADAN RASUL-ALLAH".

The English translation is:
"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy to be worshiped but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Take a shower, (Some people prefer to shower before making the testimony ; either way is acceptable.)



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Pillars of Islam

The practice of Islam is composed of five pillars, which are expected to be followed by all Muslims. They are;

1• Shahadah, or testimony of faith. The shahadah is the first pillar of Islam. It is the expression of faith that states, "There is none worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah," or in Arabic, "Ashhadu alla ilaha illa'llah wa ashadu anna Muhammada rasulu'llah." The shahada can be said either in English, Arabic or whichever is your native language. However, many Muslims prefer to use Arabic since Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. In order for someone to enter into Islam, they must express their faith by saying the shahada , as it is written above, with sincerity.

2• Salat, or prayer. The second pillar of Islam is the salat. Once someone enters into Islam, they need to learn the salat, which is performed five times each day, just before sunrise, at noon, in the mid-afternoon, just after the sun goes down and at night. Versus of the Qur'an are recited in Arabic during the prayers and each of the five prayers vary slightly. The easiest way to learn the prayers is by going to a local mosque and asking someone to show you the prayers. The prayer times are based on the cycle of the sun and moon and vary each day. Prayer times for each day are posted on the Internet or printed in local Islamic magazines. Prayers can be performed in any location, such as at home or in the work place. However, they must be preformed in an area that is clean and away from disruptions.



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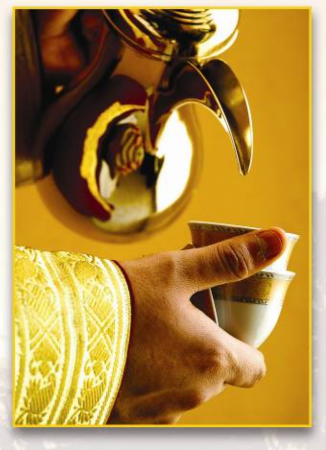
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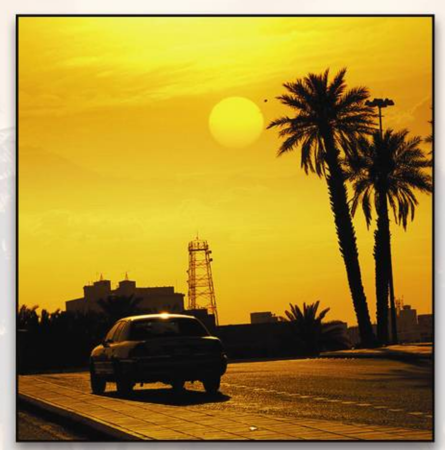


3• Zakat, or almsgiving. Zakat is obligatory when a certain amount of money, called the nisab (or minimum amount) is reached or exceeded. Zakat is not obligatory if the amount owned is less than this nisab. So a Muslim is expected to give 2.5% of this amount to the poor and needy as stated in the Quran chapter at-Taubah verses 3435-.

4• Fasting Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims are required to fast from dawn to sunset. During this time, they must not eat or drink anything, avoid engaging in sexual activity. One of the reasons for the fasting is to help develop self-discipline. The Islamic calendar is based on lunar cycles, and the month of Ramadan will vary each year. At the end of Ramadan is a celebration call Eid al-Fitr. This celebration is one of the two largest Islamic holidays.



5• Hajj, or pilgrimage. Pilgrimage to Makkah - the Hajj - is an obligation only for those who are physically and financially able to perform it. Nevertheless, people go to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe providing a unique opportunity for those of different nations to meet one another. Although Makkah is always filled with visitors, the annual Hajj begins in the twelfth month of the Islamic year (which is lunar, not solar, so that Hajj and Ramadan fall sometimes in summer, sometimes in winter). Pilgrims wear special clothes: simple garments which strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before God.



3• Zakat, or almsgiving. Zakat is obligatory when a certain amount of money, called the nisab (or minimum amount) is reached or exceeded. Zakat is not obligatory if the amount owned is less than this nisab. So a Muslim is expected to give 2.5% of this amount to the poor and needy as stated in the Quran chapter at-Taubah verses 3435-.

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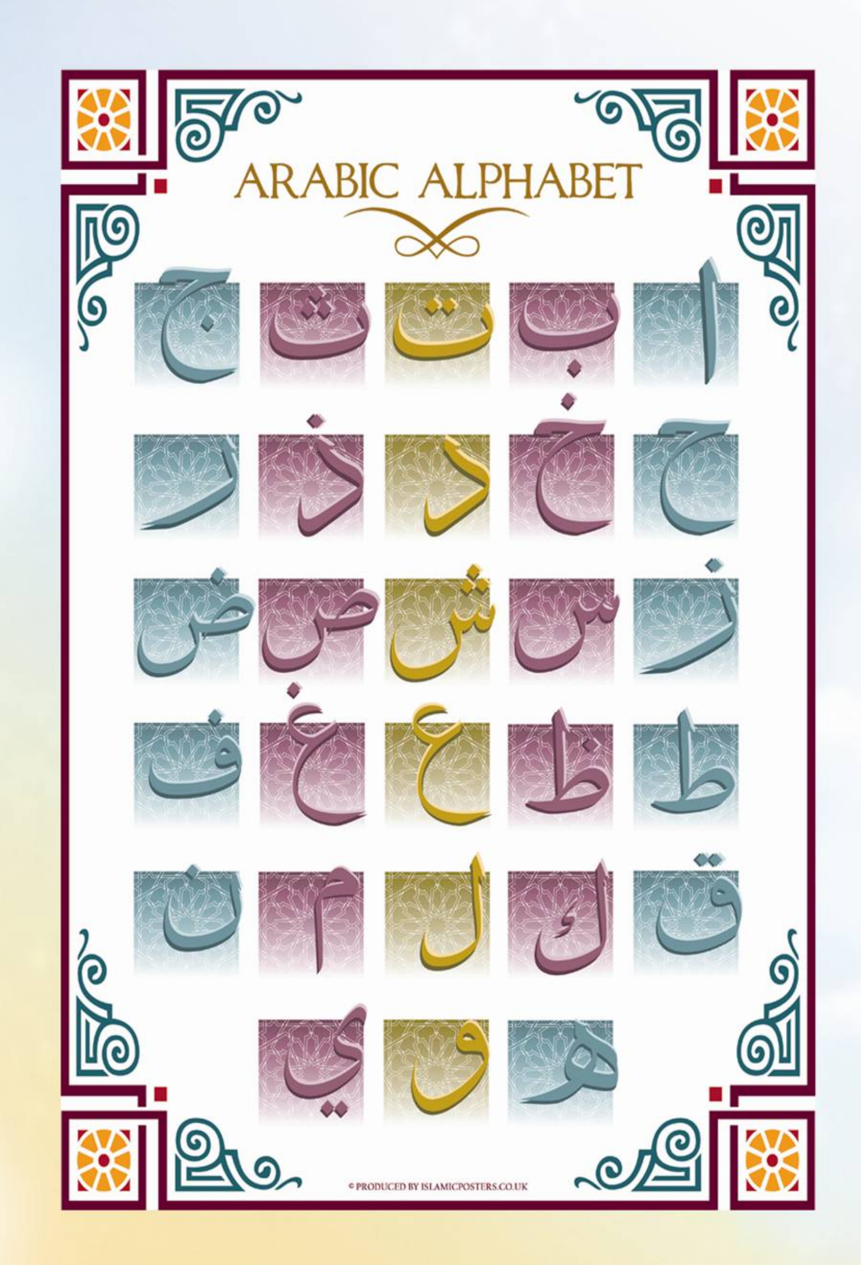


Further Readings

1. Al-Qur'an, Yusuf Ali/Pickethall/Khan translations
2. The Sealed Nectar, by: Mubarak Furi
3. A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam
4. Tawheed, by Dr Bilal Philips
5. Quran and Modern Science, by: Dr Zakir Naik
6. Miracles of the Quran, by: Harun Yahya
7. Islam is Your Birthright, Majid S ArRassi
8. What is Islam? By: Jamaal Zarabozo

Recommended Web Sites

1. www.thedeenshow.com
2. www.sultan.org
3. www.islamhouse.com



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